

#### REMARKS

Applicants thank the Examiner for the thorough consideration given the present application. Claims 1-16 are currently being prosecuted.

#### ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

It is gratefully acknowledged that the Examiner considers the subject matter of claims 1-16 as being allowable

#### CLAIM FOR PRIORITY

It is gratefully acknowledged that the Examiner has recognized the Applicants' claim for foreign priority. In view of the fact that the Applicants' claim for foreign priority has been perfected, no additional action is required from the Applicants at this time.

#### DRAWINGS

The Examiner has not approved the Formal Drawings submitted by the Applicants. It is respectfully submitted that the drawings comply with the requirements of the USPTO. If the Examiner has any objections to the Formal Drawings he is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned as soon as possible so that appropriate action may be taken. No further action is believed to be necessary at this time unless the undersigned receives a notice from the Examiner.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

The Examiner has acknowledged the Information Disclosure Statement filed on July 8, 2004. An initialed copy of the PTO-1449 has been received from the Examiner. No further action is necessary at this time.

With respect to JP 3277489 cited on page 1 of the Specification, attached hereto is a Letter together with a copy and abstract of JP 3277489 and a PTO/SB08 as requested by the Examiner. An initialed copy of the PTO/SB/08 should be sent to the undersigned at the earliest convenience of the Examiner.

#### OBJECTION TO THE ABSTRACT

The Examiner has objected to the wording set forth in the Abstract. As the Examiner will note, attached hereto is an amended Abstract of the Disclosure. The amendments comply with the Examiner's requests to overcome the objection. Entry of the amended Abstract of the Disclosure into the Official File is respectfully requested.

#### NO PROSECUTION HISTORY ESTOPPEL

Claims 1-16 have not been amended. No prosecution history estoppel would apply to the interpretation of the limitations set forth in claims 1-16 in view of the fact that this subject matter has been continuously presented since the original filing date of the present application.

### REQUEST FOR INTERVIEW

If the Examiner has any questions with regard to this application, he is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at (703) 205-8000 so that an interview can be arranged in connection with this application.

### CONCLUSION

Since the patents cited by the Examiner have not been utilized to reject the claims, but to merely show the state of the art, no comment need be made with respect thereto.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, reconsideration of the rejections and allowance of all of the claims are respectfully requested.

All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding rejections and that they be withdrawn. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance.

A prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment is respectfully requested.

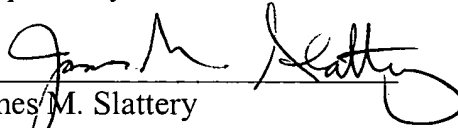
Application No.: 10/500,979  
Amendment dated March 12, 2007  
Reply to Office Action of January 10, 2007

Docket No.: 0038-0439PUS1  
Art Unit 3671  
Page 7 of 7

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Dated: March 12, 2007

Respectfully submitted,

By   
James M. Slattery

Registration No.: 28,380  
BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH,  
LLP  
8110 Gatehouse Rd  
Suite 100 East  
P.O. Box 747  
Falls Church, Virginia 22040-0747  
(703) 205-8000  
Attorney for Applicant